



NEWS RELEASE
May 11, 2005

CONTACT: Michael Norris, Art-Reach Executive Director
215-951-0316 or mnorris@art-reach.org

Sheila Dean Ross, Delaware Division of the Arts
302-577-8286 or sross@state.de.us

**Art-Reach Partners with VSA arts of Delaware and the
Delaware Division of the Arts to Promote Cultural Accessibility**
Delaware Arts Organizations Receive Free Listings in Online Access Guide

Art-Reach, the nonprofit organization that facilitates access to the arts for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages throughout the Delaware Valley, has launched a unique partnership with **VSA arts of Delaware** and the **Delaware Division of the Arts** to promote the physical and programmatic accessibility of Delaware arts organizations and cultural venues.

Through this partnership, nonprofit Delaware arts organizations can receive a complimentary site visit evaluating the accessibility of their facilities against the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as a complimentary listing on the online version of **Art-Reach's** award-winning Access Guide, available at the Art-Reach website at www.art-reach.org.

In addition to the site visit and listing, participating arts organizations will also receive a written report of site-visit findings and a detailed guide on how to improve accessibility. The **Delaware Division of the Arts** is underwriting the cost of the accessibility site visits, which will be conducted by **VSA arts of Delaware**.

"The Access Guide is the Delaware Valley's premier resource on cultural accessibility," said **Art-Reach** Executive Director Michael L. Norris. "It gives people with disabilities and their friends and families the information they need to participate in the rich cultural life of our region. The Access Guide already contains entries on nearly 140 cultural venues and other resources for the disability community, and we are excited about expanding it to include Delaware."

Published in 2000, the Access Guide was converted to an online format in 2002. "The website version allows us to expand and update the information in the guide very easily and quickly," said Norris, "and it also allows people to link right through to each venue's own website for more information." Each entry in the Access Guide includes a detailed description of that cultural venue's physical and programmatic accessibility features, as well as general information about mission, hours and admission.

(Over)

The following Delaware arts organizations and cultural venues have already signed up for the Access Guide project: the Chapel Street Players, Coro Allegro, the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts, the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, Delaware Theatre Company, the Loudis Recital Hall at the University of Delaware, the Newark Symphony Orchestra and Newark United Methodist Church, and Winterthur. Other interested arts organizations should contact **Art-Reach** at 215-951-0316.

Funding for **Art-Reach**'s programs and services in Delaware has been generously provided by AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals.

To view the Access Guide or for more information about **Art-Reach**, go to www.art-reach.org.

###

Art-Reach (www.art-reach.org) is a nonprofit organization that facilitates access to the arts for people with disabilities or economic disadvantages and that serves the human-service and arts communities and the public as a resource on cultural accessibility.

VSA arts of Delaware (www.vsadelaware.org) is the only organization in Delaware with a sole mission devoted specifically to enhancing the capabilities, confidence and quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing life-long learning opportunities in the arts.

The **Delaware Division of the Arts** (www.artsdel.org), a branch of the Delaware Department of State, is dedicated to promoting and developing the arts throughout the state. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council (DSAC), the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life.